

## Cosmetics

People use cosmetics to look and smell good. These products can range from eye shadow to underarm sprays. They can have almost anything in them. Cosmetics can be put in stores without FDA safety tests. Cosmetics must meet FDA standards once they are in stores.

Almost all cosmetics can cause skin problems. It is common to have an allergy to a cosmetic. Your skin might get a little red and sore at first. But then the problem could get a lot worse. You need to be careful about the products you use on your skin.

### How do allergies start?

You may use a product too much. Something in it does not agree with your system. Allergies can also build up over time. You might use a product safely for years, but then have problems with it later.

### I have seen the term AHA. What does it mean?

AHA is the short term for alpha hydroxy acids. Cosmetic makers claim that AHA lessens wrinkles. They say that it softens other signs of aging, too. These claims may be true.

### How safe is AHA?

Many people have had skin problems after using AHAs. They have sent lots of complaints to the FDA. The complaints are about:

- redness
- swelling
- burning
- blisters
- bleeding
- rash
- itching
- changes in skin color

### Can I use AHA products safely?

To use AHA products safely, you should:

- Protect your skin from the sun.
- Look for labels that say exactly what is in the products.
- Buy only products with AHA of 10 percent or less.
- Buy only products with pH of 3.5 or more.
- Do a test first on a small patch of skin.
- Stop using the product if you have itching, burning, swelling or other problems.
- See your skin doctor (called a dermatologist) if you have problems.

### Safety Tips for Beauty

- Keep makeup closed tight when not in use.
- Wash your hands before you put on makeup.
- Do not put on makeup while you are driving.
- Do not share makeup with anyone else.
- Do not add liquid to makeup.
- Stop using makeup if your skin breaks out.
- Throw away makeup if the color changes.
- Throw away makeup if it gets an odor.
- Do not use eye makeup if you have pinkeye.
- Keep makeup out of the sun.
- Do not use spray cans near a source of heat. That could cause a fire.
- Do not use spray cans while you are smoking. That could also cause a fire.

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COSMETICS

## ***Cosmetics (cont.)***

### **How long do cosmetics last?**

Products for your eyes last a shorter time than other cosmetics. It's a good idea to throw away mascara after three months, for example. That's because you can get eye infections from it. If mascara dries out, do not add water or saliva to it. That can cause germs to grow.

Natural products have a very short shelf life. You should replace them even more often.

### **Are "testers" at makeup counters safe?**

Lots of people use the testers at makeup counters. Testers can have lots of germs. Products you keep in your home are less likely to have germs.

Do you want to test a product at the counter anyway? If so, use a new sponge or cotton swab.

### **Are labels important?**

Yes! Always read them carefully. A label tells you:

- what's in the product.
- how to use the product safely.
- if a product that claims to work better is any different from others.

#### **Terms to Know**

**Alcohol Free:** The product does not contain ethyl alcohol. The product may contain other alcohols.

**Cruelty Free:** "Cruelty free" claims no animals were hurt in making this product. But most products have been tested on animals at some point. Look for "no new animal testing."

**Fragrance Free:** The product has no odor. But fragrances may be used to hide the smell of chemicals.

**Hypoallergenic:** This term claims the product is less likely to cause an allergic reaction. This kind of claim has no basis in science. Labels make lots of claims that products won't cause skin problems. But any product can cause them.

**Natural:** The product is made from plants or animals. There is no proof that natural products are better for the skin than other products.

**Noncomedogenic:** The product does not contain anything that can clog pores and lead to acne.

**Shelf Life (Expiration Date):** These dates are only a rule of thumb. Products must be stored and handled the right way. If not, they may expire long before the date shown.

#### **To Learn More ...**

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